

Mr. Speaker, rather, the vote on this bill boils down to two fundamental questions: First, do we want citizens' tax dollars funding directly our churches and houses of worship? Second, is it right to discriminate in job hiring when using tax dollars?

By directly funding churches and houses of worship with tax dollars, this bill obliterates the Bill of Rights' wall of separation between church and State. As all of human history has proven, entanglement between government and religion will lead to less religious freedom and more religious strife. Government funding of our churches will absolutely lead to government regulation of our churches, and it will cause religious strife as thousands of churches compete for billions of dollars annually.

Mr. Speaker, to my conservative colleagues I would say this: No one should be more concerned than true political conservatives about the idea of the long arm of the Federal Government and its regulations extending into our sacred houses of worship.

I would challenge any Member of this House to show me one nation anywhere in the world that funds its churches and has more religious liberty, more religious vitality or tolerance than right here in the United States.

Regarding the religious discrimination subsidized by this bill, I would say this: No American citizen, not one, should ever have to pass someone else's religious test in order to qualify for a federally funded job. Sadly, under this bill, a church or group associated with Bob Jones University could put out a sign that says, "No Catholics Need Apply Here" for a federally funded job. That is wrong. This bill is wrong for religion, it is wrong for our churches, and it is wrong for our Nation.

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Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. HOUGHTON), a distinguished member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, there are many parts of this bill. The part I would like to concentrate on is something which the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) and I have been working on for a long time. The basis is this: there are 31 million Americans, according to a Department of Agriculture report, who go to bed hungry every night; and 12 million of those are children. One of the things this bill does is to encourage and give a tax incentive to restaurants and hotels and people like that who have excess food, throw it away, to give it to these organizations, to help these people that are hungry.

That is all it is. It is a very simple part of this bill. I think it is needed, and I think it is the right area.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH).

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I would take second place to no one in this

Chamber in my faith and my belief in God. I would take second place to no one in this Chamber in terms of my personal commitment to supporting faith-based organizations. But I cannot support the bill as presently drafted and specifically focusing on the discrimination aspect of the bill.

No one in this Chamber would ask that a Jew serve as a Catholic priest or a Muslim serve as a Christian minister. But what this bill specifically does, and we should face it and we should talk about it and think about the implication, is that the person serving the soup literally with the ladle would be allowed to be only of a certain faith, whatever that faith may be, with Federal funds. That is a very scary concept, I think, for many Americans. I ask my colleagues to sensitize themselves about that. We could talk around that issue. We could talk any way that we want. If that money is coming from my donation as a free will offering, and that institution chooses to do that, they have the ability, but not with Federal funds, not with taxpayer dollars.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN), a distinguished member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important as we listen to this debate to hear what the opponents are saying. They are not attacking this bill head-on. They are chewing around the edges. They are trying to set up roadblocks. They are trying to put new provisions in law with respect to the civil rights acts. What they are trying to do is make this program unworkable.

We hear this comment repeated over and over: Catholic social services, Lutheran social services is getting all this government money. That is true. The large, high-financed, well-established churches do get Federal funding. They can afford the attorneys, they can afford the accountants, they can afford the largesse to afford these complicated tax structures to get this money.

That is not what this bill is about. This bill is about the little guy. This bill is about the people who have those small, faith-based organizations in our inner cities, in our rural areas, who know the names, who know the faces, of those who are in need.

The problem that we have had with this Federal Government, with the welfare state, with our approach to poverty, is that we have treated the superficial wounds that have plagued our population but we have not treated the soul. We have not treated the heart of the problem. The goal here is to let those small institutions of civil society throughout America, those faith-based organizations, who know the name of the person in need, who are there in the ghettos, in the streets, to help them, to sight their problems and to help them and to get assistance.

This bill is about discrimination. We are discriminating against those groups from getting equal treatment of our laws to help these people in need. It maintains every point of our current civil rights laws today. There is no civil rights law that is degraded in this act as we move forward. We are simply removing discrimination against these groups.

I urge passage of this bill. I think this bill has the potential of changing our culture more so than any other measure we may be considering here in this Congress. I think those who are on the other side are well-intended, but I think it is the right time that we pass this legislation. I urge its passage.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK).

Mr. FRANK. Mr. Speaker, if what the previous gentleman said was in the bill, it would be much less controversial. It does change civil rights laws. It preempts, as the chairman of the committee acknowledged in the debate, all State and local laws that many of these organizations do now have to abide by in their purely secular activity, and it allows discrimination with Federal funds for purely secular activities. It says, "No, you can't discriminate based on race, but you can based on religion."

But, sadly, all too often in America, religion becomes a proxy for race. When Orthodox Jews get this money in Brooklyn, no blacks will be hired. When the Nation of Islam gets this money in Baltimore to deal with public housing, no whites will be hired. In fact, religion is all too often correlated with race. And when you say to religious groups, provide a purely secular activity with Federal tax dollars but in employing people to serve the soup or build the homes or clean up or give drug treatment, hire only your own coreligionists, you are empowering people de facto to engage in racial segregation. That is not worthy of the purposes of this bill.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Speaker, I would just point out that no one is going to make a \$25 donation because they can get \$3.75 back from their taxes a year from now. If we want to help these organizations, we ought to increase the appropriations that have been cut over the past few years.

And we are not going around the edges. The basic core part of the bill does not help little churches. They still have to do a grant-writing proposal. They still have to run a program pursuant to Federal regulations. They still have to withstand an audit. But they cannot discriminate now, and this bill will allow them to discriminate in hiring. That is wrong. That is why the bill ought to be defeated.

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Just briefly on the tax provisions in this bill, this bill is about fairness. It